

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 10 with the following:

Referring to Figs. 1-3, there is shown a lawn mower 10 having articulating decks 11-14 and hinge systems 16-18 for interconnecting each adjacent pair of mower decks 11-12, 12-13, and 13-14, respectively. Each hinge system 16-18 includes a pair of hinge assemblies operable to allow one deck to pivot about an axis relative to an adjacent deck. Only the forward hinge assemblies 21-23 for each hinge system 16-18, respectively, are shown in Fig. ~~1~~2, at the front side of the decks. The companion, rear hinge assemblies for each forward hinge assembly 21-23 hingedly interconnect their decks at the opposing, rear and unshown sides of the decks. Only one hinge assembly 22 will be described herein, it being understood that the other two forward hinge assemblies 21 and 23 and the three rear, unshown companion hinge assemblies each includes the same components and each interconnects its pair of decks in the same manner as hinge assembly 22, except where otherwise indicated.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 1 with the following:

Referring to Figs. 3-7, the outer frame of ~~deck 10~~central deck 12 extends laterally at frame extension 26 toward deck 11. Frame extension 26 (a frame member of deck ~~10~~12) has defined therein an upper, limit hole 27 and a lower, hinge hole 28. Deck ~~11~~13 includes a forward frame panel 29 and an angle bracket 30 that is fixed to panel 29 by any appropriate means such as welding. Panel 29 and bracket 30 (both frame members of deck ~~11~~13) together define a slot 31 into which frame extension 26 is received when decks ~~10 and 11~~12 and 13 are brought together.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 12 with the following:

Pin mount 43 includes a central opening 56, a bolt mounting hole 57, and a pair of opposing, threaded thrust holes 58 and 59. Main bushing 37 is made of oil impregnated ~~powered~~powdered metal and is sized externally for a press fit into hinge hole 28. The internal diameter of bushing 37 is set to be just slightly larger than the outer diameter of pin 42 to permit pin 42 to rotate freely within bushing 37. The axial length of bushing 37 is substantially equal to the thickness of frame extension 26, as shown in Fig. 6.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 16 with the following:

In the assembled condition shown in Fig. 6, spacer 36 is a ring that surrounds pin 42 between anti-rotation bushing 35 and main bushing 37. Spacer 36 has an axial length designed to position main bushing 37 in the proper position along pin 42 whereby, when frame extension 26 is properly positioned within slot 31 of deck 11, anti-rotation bushing 35 and main bushing ~~35-37~~37 will both be properly aligned within their respective openings (63 and 39 and 28), as shown in Fig. 6. Retention ring 38 is secured within retention ring slot 46 to limit the inward movement of main bushing 37 beyond slot 46. Retention ring 38 is a coil retention ring and permits slight radial expansion and assembly onto pin 42. Alternatively, retention ring 38 may comprise other configurations or structure, such as a C-clip, so long as it may be applied to and/or used with pin 42 to limit the inward movement of main bushing 37 beyond the desired point. Frame panel 29 defines a hole 66 that is aligned with shaped hole 39 of angle bracket 30 so that when pin assembly 34 is inserted, the inboard end 49 of pin 42 will pass through hole 66 for support.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 16 with the following:

Eventually, pin 42, one or more of the bushings, other of the hinge assembly elements, or other parts of the mower will require hinge assembly 22 (or one of the other hinge assemblies) to be disassembled. This is accomplished by first bending back the tabs of bolt locking tab 72 and removing bolt 70. Then, a pair of thrust bolts 91 and 92 are inserted into threaded thrust holes 58 and 59 and advanced until their leading ends contact spacer plate 62 (or angle bracket 30 if a thrust plate is not used). ~~Alternatively, each~~ Each thrust bolt 91 and 92 is then advanced alternatively a small increment (e.g. a quarter turn). As the leading ends of the thrust bolts bear against spacer plate 62 (or angle bracket 30), pin mount 43 is forcibly backed away from spacer plate 62 and angle bracket 30, which by virtue of retention ring 38, pulls anti-rotation bushing 35 and spacer 36 therewith and, most importantly, pulls main bushing 37 out of its press fit position within hinge hole 28.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 1 with the following:

Angle bracket 30 defines a threaded hole 83 (Fig. 6) that, when decks 10 and 11 are hingedly connected by pin assembly 34, aligns with limit hole 27 of frame extension 26. A bolt 84 is threadedly received within hole 83 and extends into oversized hole 27. The clearance 85 provided between bolt 84 and hole 27 permits deck 11 to pivot about the axis of pin 42 (and its companion pin, which is not shown, but hingedly connects decks ~~10 and 11~~ 12 and 13 at the rear side of the decks). The difference in diameter between the shank of bolt 84 and hole 27 defines the degree of articulation (hinged movement) about the corresponding hinge pins 42. This bolt and oversized hole combination that governs the limits of deck

articulation is provided at hinge systems 16 and 17, but not at hinge system 18. The limits of articulation between decks 13 and 14 is provided by a deck pivoting system 88 that controls the angle of pivot of deck 14 relative to deck 13, which includes deck 13 pivoting up approximately 90 degrees for a narrower mowing width and for transport.